

# NEWS

## for public health partners

During the 2004-05 season, influenza activity can be described as “mild”. Influenza A (H3N2) viruses predominated but influenza B virus also circulated. This summary is based on data reported by Franklin County Influenza Sentinel Providers, absentee data from Columbus Public Schools, Pneumonia and Influenza mortality, Emergency Department visits and Over the Counter Medication sales.

Outbreaks of avian influenza A (H5N1) among poultry continued to be reported in Southeast Asia throughout the 2004-2005 season. From mid-December 2004 to June 28, 2005 these outbreaks were associated with human infections and death in Vietnam (60 cases and 18 deaths) and Cambodia (4 cases, all fatal). In February 2004, CDC issued recommendations for enhanced surveillance for human infection with avian influenza among travelers returning to the United States from H5N1 affected countries. As of July 13, these recommendations remain in effect and can be found at

<http://www.phppo.cdc.gov/HAN/ArchiveSys/ViewMsgV.asp?AlertNum=00221>

For more up-to-date influenza information, please visit the CDC website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm>

### **Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality**

The percentage of P&I deaths in Franklin County peaked at 17.1% during the week ending April 2 and exceeded the epidemic thresholds set during the 2003-04 season. (Figure 1)

### **Influenza Morbidity and Influenza Like Illness Reports**

The percentage of patient visits for influenza-like illness in Franklin County has been below 1% throughout the season which is lower than the percentage reported in the East North Central region of the United States (the region that includes Ohio) and that of the nation as a whole. (Figure2)

### **Columbus Public Schools (CPS): Absenteeism**

The percent of Columbus Public Schools students absent peaked the week ending January 29, 2005, which is higher than the increase seen same period last year. (Figure 3).

### **Emergency Department Visits and Over the Counter Medication Sales\* (ED & OTC)**

This seasons' data shows that the proportion of visits to local hospital emergency departments (ED) that are coded as respiratory illness started to increase substantially in late-January, reached a peak in mid- to late-February, and has slowly decreased since then. The number of OTC cough and cold medication sales have also dropped since reaching a peak in mid-February. (Figure4)

**Note:** For flu vaccine and information please visit [www.vaccine4me.com](http://www.vaccine4me.com) or call 614- 437-2900 or 1-888-202-1319.



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Figure 1: Percentage of Deaths due to Pneumonia and Influenza Columbus, Ohio 2004-2005

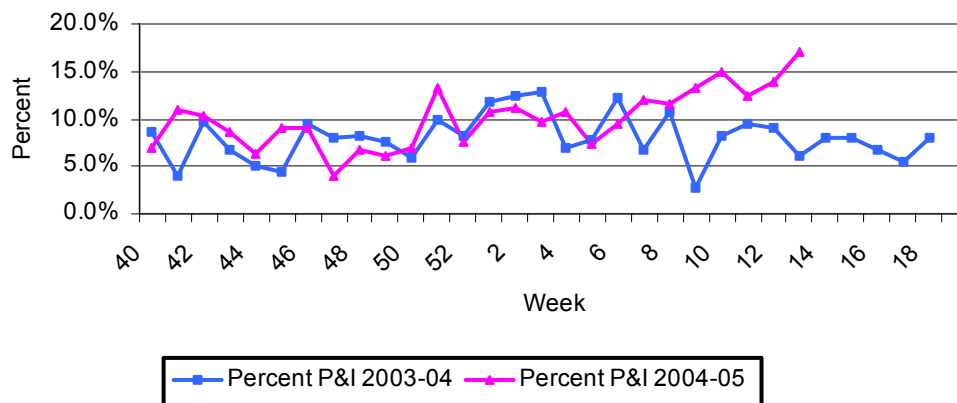
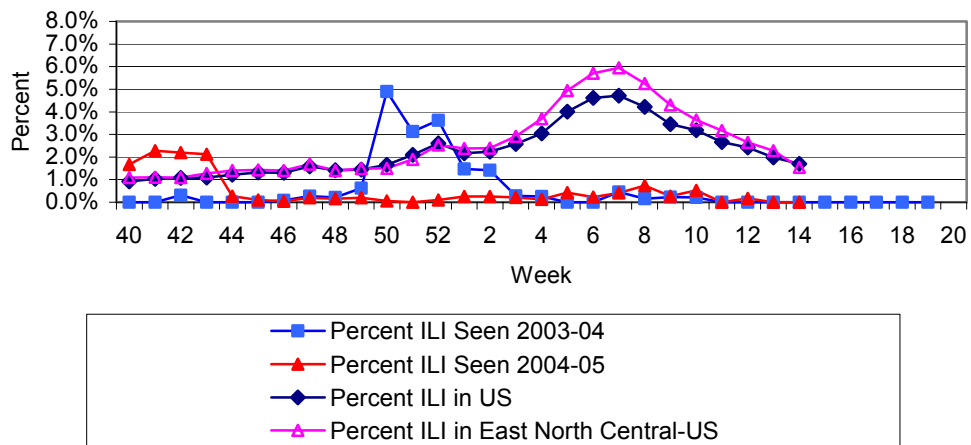
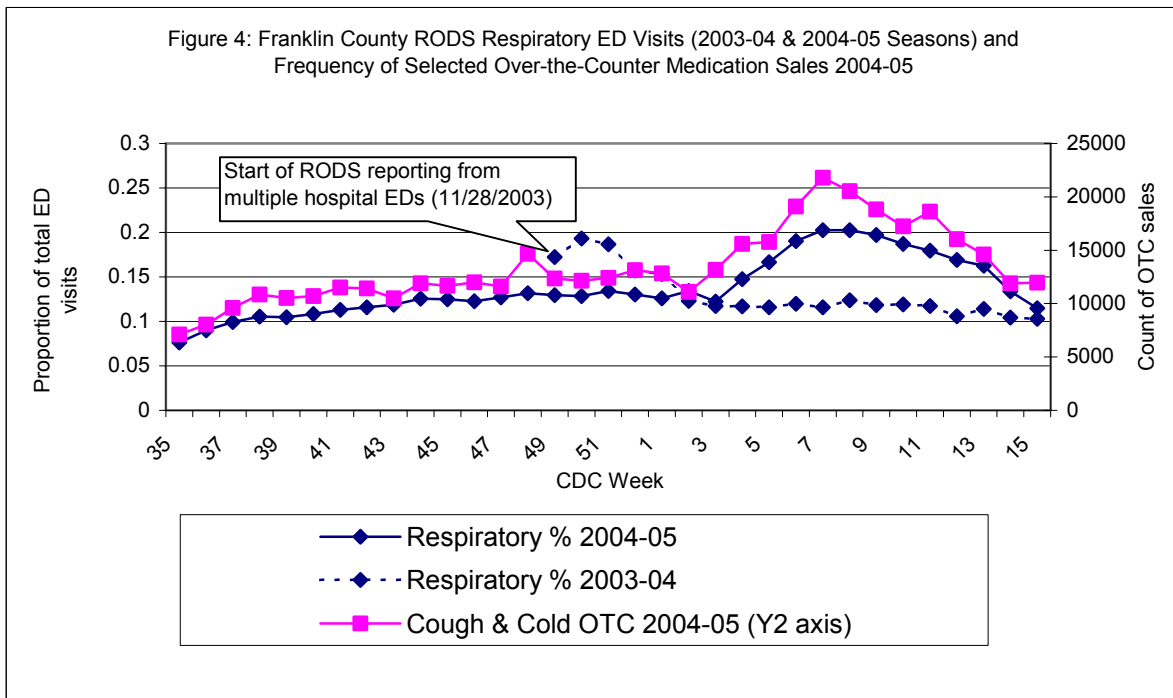
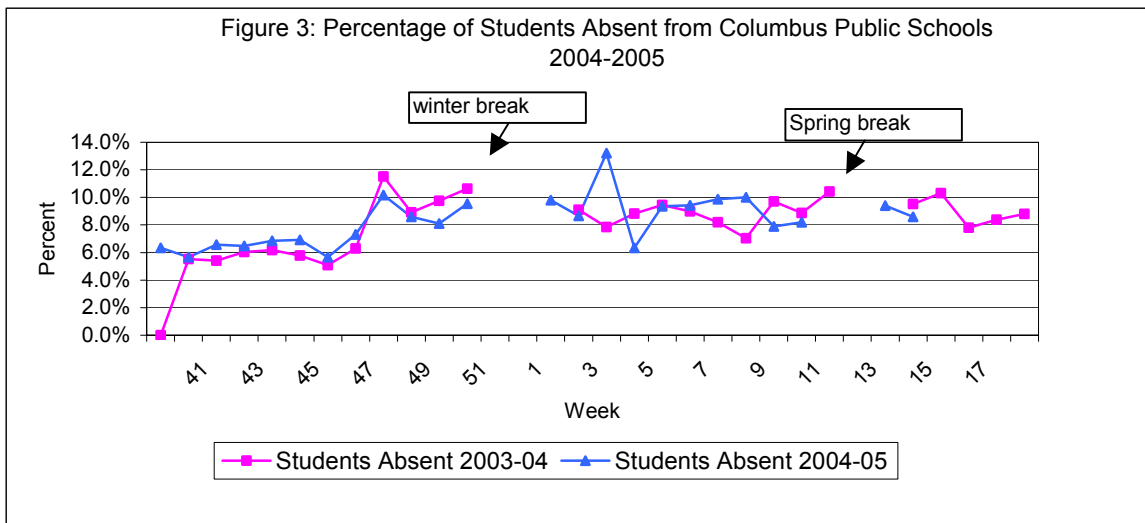


Figure 2: Percentage of Visits for Influenza Like Illness Reported by Sentinel Providers Franklin County 2004-2005





\* Data may not be complete each week. Data changes are made as reports are received weekly.